

# **Rutgers Students Against Hunger: Urban New Jersey**

Rutgers University students propose donating leftover bakery goods from Pathmark Supermarkets to Meals on Wheels and Project Solution Homeless Shelter

Tag Words: Hunger; Newark; Middlesex County; Poverty Line; Homeless Shelter; Meals on Wheels

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## **Summary**

This report addresses a major concern in today's world of continuously increasing populations and failing economy, that being hunger. Two major areas that our group decided to focus on are Newark, NJ and Middlesex County, NJ. Research showed that the vast majority of the populations in these two New Jersey cities are living below the poverty line and therefore do not have enough to eat. As our community service project, we propose the collection leftover bakery items from local Pathmark Supermarkets and deliver them to two key locations; Project Solution Homeless Shelter in Newark and Meals on Wheels of New Brunswick.

## **The Issue: Hunger and Homelessness Statistics**

While most of us in the United States take our food for granted and waste food that could potentially feed a number of people, significant portions of urban populations are homeless and hungry. With poverty comes homelessness, and with that comes starvation. Everyday thousands of pounds of leftover food from restaurants, schools, and supermarkets is being discarded and goes to waste. This “waste” could partially solve the issue of hunger and help many humans meet their metabolic requirements. In a “wealthy” country such as the United States, 49.1 million people (4.0 percent) live in households where food supply is inefficient and this statistic has more than doubled since the year 2000. Research also shows that 6.9 percent of US households are at risk for hunger because they cannot afford higher quality foods and resort to low-nutrient, “emergency” foods to get by.

According to the 2009 NJ PIRC Report, there was estimated to be approximately 796 homeless men, women, and children in Middlesex County alone. This number only represents a subset of those people labeled “homeless” who were either counted or responded to the survey. It was reported that the actual number of homeless in Middlesex County, is two to four times larger at any given time. Over the course of a year, however, 2,630 adults and children are in and out of homelessness in the county. Homeless goes hand in hand with starvation, and the basic necessity of having food to sustain life becomes the biggest struggle. New Brunswick offers various food banks and homeless services to the needy including Rutgers Against Hunger, Project Sunshine, Elijah’s Promise, Meals on Wheels, and so on. Unfortunately, if one cannot manage to get to these places, the availability of food is scarce.

A prime example of homelessness in the New Jersey area is the city of Newark. The Newark Homeless Health Care service estimated a homeless population of approximately 9,000- 20,000 in the area and has serviced around 4,000 homeless people in the city. In addition, 25% of families live below the poverty line and 12% are unemployed. One does not have to be homeless to be hungry. As is inferred from our research, the lack of money leads to the lack of food. Newark is major district in which food scarcity needs to be addressed.

## **Community Service Project**

For our community service project that addresses the issue of hunger, we propose teaming with Rutgers Against Hunger (RAH) and Pathmark Supermarkets. Pathmark Supermarkets would like to donate their leftover bakery items to RAH, and we in turn would like to deliver those items from RAH to people in need in Newark and New Brunswick, NJ. We will deliver the food to two locations; Project Solution Homeless Shelter in Newark and Meals on Wheels of New Brunswick.

## Business Plan Based On Community Service Project

### **♣ Description**

Our group proposes to organize a student-run volunteer business based out of Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus. Our organization would receive weekly shipments of leftover bakery items from Pathmark Supermarkets in New Brunswick and Newark. The food would then be delivered to our headquarters on campus and then distributed to target locations. The types of food being donated include breads, bagels, muffins, pastries, cakes, cookies, etc. The food will be packaged into individualized “brown bags” and distributed to Project Solution Homeless Shelter and Meals on Wheels.

#### ♣ **Donating Pathmark Locations and Target Audiences**

Our community project proposes to service two locations. The first will be the Project Solution Homeless Shelter in Newark, NJ. It is located on 355 South 6<sup>th</sup> St. The second target will service the under-privileged population of New Brunswick via Meals on Wheels. The headquarters are located at 100 Livingston Ave, New Brunswick, NJ.

The food would be donated from two Pathmark Locations. The first is 1345 Rt.1, North Brunswick and the second supermarket is located at 281-295 Ferry St, Newark, NJ. The bakery items will be delivered from the Pathmark centers to Rutgers Against Hunger administrators on both Newark and New Brunswick campuses. We, along with a team of volunteers, will package and deliver the food to the target locations. The types of food being donated include cakes, cookies, breads, bagels, pastries, and so on. The deliveries will be made multiple times per week to ensure freshness of food. In addition, our services will be advertised a number of ways including through our website, through Newark and New Brunswick Targum Newspapers, local papers, flyers, and by word of mouth. Donations will be accepted through our website and by mail.

#### ♣ **Rutgers Against Hunger**

Rutgers University students have organized Rutgers Against Hunger (RAH) to help those who are suffering from hunger. Rutgers Against Hunger is working to increase the awareness of hunger, promote activism to overcome hunger, raising money, and collecting food to provide relief to the hungry. RAH has a university wide food drive and has partnered with the New Jersey Federation of Food Banks. In 2008, the New Jersey Federation of Food Banks distributed 27 million pounds of food to thousands of organizations in New Jersey that serve the hungry. RAH is also researching the reasons behind food insecurity and ways to increase food production as well as food distribution. The students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Rutgers University run Rutgers Against Hunger.

Pathmark is interested in partnering with Rutgers Against Hunger. Pathmark wants to donate their left over bakery goods to RAH every night. Our group, and volunteers with cars proposes to transport the food to two locations: Project Solution Homeless Shelter (Newark) and Meals on Wheels (New Brunswick). Through Pathmark and RAH, we will be able to reach people in New Brunswick and Newark.

#### ♣ **Management Plan and Financial Sources**

Our business will be directed by the founders; Katherine, Rima, Malay, and Sung. We will instate four assistant directors, also students, and 2 from the Newark Campus and from the New

Brunswick Campus. We will also ask for correspondents from the homeless shelter and Meals on Wheels with whom we will constantly be in touch with.

Our business is completely non-profit. Major costs include that of transportation and packaging materials for the food, which we plan to cover through donations and grants. As the business grows and develops further, we will consider partnering with bigger corporations for support, who in turn will be recognized for their humanitarianism. In addition to donations to help cover our costs, we will be applying for the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program. Details for this grant are provided below.

#### ♣ **Issues**

One major issue that could arise is that of proper food storage. Bakery items will be kept at room temperature and in airtight containers. Food will be delivered before spoiling and deliveries will be made bi-weekly. The food will be inspected by FDA officials and Meals on Wheels specialists. Another potential issue that may arise is that of food shortages. We will notify the shelter and Meals on Wheels of the quantity of food being delivered so that they may plan accordingly.

#### • **Transportation Plan for Bakery Items**

Volunteers in our group will pick up the leftover bakery goods from Pathmark. These volunteers will consist of three teams. In each team there will be four members and they will each need to have a car. Every volunteer in this group will need to have an excellent driving record in order to avoid any inconsistency or accidents. Pathmark will have the bakery goods ready for our group to pick up at 9 pm at night Monday thru Saturday. These three teams will be dedicated to pick up and deliver the foods. The teams will work in alternating shifts to divide driving duties. After the food is picked up at Pathmark at 9 p.m., it will be delivered to our headquarters in New Brunswick where another team in charge of organizing the pickup will then package the baked goods into brown bags. Once this is done, the bakery goods will be ready to be picked up at 2 pm the next morning by the next team of volunteer drivers. These volunteers will then drive these packaged goods to Project solution homeless shelters, and meals on wheels.

#### Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP)

- ♣ The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program is funded by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), which is a part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- ♣ In order to be eligible for the grant, an organization must meet some of the goals of CFPCGP.
- ♣ The goals of the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program are to:

1. Meet the food needs of low-income individuals
  2. Increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities
  3. Promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues
- ♣ The CFPCGP only offers grants to non-profit organizations that benefit members of a low-income community. Organizations that apply for this grant must be “community- based”. The project proposed by an organization must provide a possible solution, rather than short-term plan, to a problem related to food in the community.
  - ♣ Organizations can apply for the grant through the website ([grants.gov](http://grants.gov)) if they meet the requirements. Students United Against Hunger plans to apply for this grant to help cover our costs.

#### Table of Costs

Transportation (\$50 per week X 52 weeks per year).....	\$2600
Packaging Materials (brown bags, plastic wrap, aluminum foil per year).....	\$5200
Advertising (flyers, newspaper ads, etc).....	\$2000
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Total Cost per year.....	\$9800

#### Letter of Intent (to be sent to Project Solutions Homeless Shelter and Meals on Wheels)

To Whom It May Concern:

As the holiday season falls upon us and as the weather turns to a bitter cold, we cannot help but count our blessings and be thankful for all that we have. In a country such as the United States, scarcity of anything is not really an issue. Most of us have more than we could ever need and never think about the possibility of being poor, homeless, and worst yet, starving. Unfortunately, hunger is an issue that a great number of people in this country and around the world have to face. In Middlesex County alone, there are approximately 800 homeless people, and in Newark there are about 4,000 homeless people.

As a community service project and hopefully a continued endeavor, Students United Against Hunger would like to help the hungry people in New Brunswick and Newark, NJ. We have been contacted by Pathmark Supermarkets, who informed us that they would like to donate their leftover bakery goods to Rutgers Against Hunger, a student run organization at Rutgers

University. Through Rutgers Against Hunger, we would like to donate a portion of that food to your agency.

We will completely cover the costs of transporting the goods, as well as packaging and storage of the food. In addition, we will notify you of the quantity of food we will be delivering so that you can plan accordingly. We ask nothing of except that you welcome our donations and use them to service those people who have limited means of acquiring food.

Please consider our proposition and feel to contact us by phone or email. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Ourfalian  
Rima Patel  
Malay Parekh  
Sung Yi

### **Contact Information**

#### ***Project Solution Homeless Shelter***

355 S 6th St  
Newark, NJ 07103-2301  
(973) 353-0005

#### ***Meals on Wheels***

100 Livingston Ave  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
(732) 249-3488

#### ***Rutgers Against Hunger***

Julie Sylvester  
732-932-5000 x585  
[sylvester@aesop.rutgers.edu](mailto:sylvester@aesop.rutgers.edu)

#### ***Pathmark***

1345 Rt. 1  
North Brunswick, NJ 08902  
732-828-3101

281-295 Ferry St.  
Newark, NJ 07105  
973-589-3922

## References

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<http://www.grants.gov/>

## Editorials

Dear Editor,

As Thanksgiving quickly approaches, food is definitely on the mind. Traditionally, Thanksgiving is a day to give thanks for the blessings in one's life, however many can agree it is also all about the meal—the heaping amounts of mashed potatoes and the Turkey that takes hours to cook. In fact, for most of us Thanksgiving is a day we allow ourselves to overindulge in massive amounts of food and get together with our families. But this year, as you do your food shopping and google the best way to cook a Turkey, take a moment and think of those people

who do not have anything to eat on Thanksgiving. In fact, Middlesex County has one of the highest poverty rates in New Jersey, with many children going hungry on November 25<sup>th</sup> (Mateo, par.4). With this thought, the hunger issue cannot be solved with one person. This issue will need the help of many people working together, united to fight hunger starting here in Middlesex County.

With the economic recession, people in New Jersey are struggling to provide food for there families. The prices of milk, eggs and breads have all soared. Also grocery prices have also rose to the higher cost of electricity and gas. People are losing their homes because they can't afford the mortgage, while business and corporations are laying people off at a very high percentage.. All these factors affect people going hungry in New Jersey. Our government figures 28 million Americans will be using Food stamps this year, which is the highest level since the program began in the 1960's(Bill Moyer's frontline).

With these unfortunate statistics One way that could help to resolve this issue would be proposing a bill that would open up space around Middlesex county for homeless people with cars. These people can bring their cars to this lot at night after a certain time, so they could park and sleep safely. Once this proposal gets passed our group, would provide these people with food. This food would be donated from Colleges, bakeries, and grocery stores. Our group will sort out the food and provide transportation of these foods to the car park.

Sincerely,

Sung Do Yi  
Sebs Student  
Rutgers University  
New Brunswick,NJ

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Joe Owens  
Editor  
Middlesex County News, Star-Ledger  
[jowens@express-times.com](mailto:jowens@express-times.com)  
610-258-7171 ext. 3535

Dear Mr. Owens:

During these tough economic times, meeting the basic necessities of life has become a struggle. More and more people in the Central New Jersey area, and undoubtedly all over the United States, are finding themselves losing their homes and property and resorting to living in shelters and on the streets. According to the 2009 NJ PITC Report, there was estimated to be approximately 796 homeless men, women, and children in Middlesex County alone. Over the course of a year, however, 2,630 adults and children are in and out of homelessness in the county. A prime example of homelessness in our area is the city of Newark. The Newark



Homeless Health Care organization has estimated a number of 273,546 homeless people in the city. I, myself, work in Newark and it is not uncommon for me to see anywhere from people lined up outside food banks to the scattered 2-3 homeless people during the 2 block walk from my parking garage to office.

It goes without saying that hunger walks hand-in-hand with homelessness. In today's world of mass-production and genetically engineered crops that produce higher yields, the reason for hunger should be eradicated. However, things do not work ideally and unfortunately, having no money means having no food.

It was taken upon a few colleagues and myself to address this issue of hunger. After much research, it was found that there are such areas, parks so to speak, that allow homeless people who live out their cars to have a safe place to park them. These "car parks" exist in Santa Barbara, CA, and one underway in Venice, CA. We would like to collaborate with these parks and possibly develop one of our own in Middlesex County and deliver food to the population within the parks.

Our main resource will be Pathmark Supermakets, who we recently contacted. Pathmark supermarkets in neighboring areas will be donating their leftover bakery items at the end of each night to our organization, which we will then distribute to the parks. Depending on the success and the outreach of our program, we will look to take on other sponsors and take steps to the elimination of hunger.

What we would like from the Star-Ledger is simply a medium through which our voices can be heard, and way to reach out to anyone willing to join our cause.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Ourfalian

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Rima Patel  
November 4, 2009  
*Home News Tribune* (Mycentraljersey.com)  
Sent via e-mail address: [hntletters@MyCentralJersey.com](mailto:hntletters@MyCentralJersey.com)

Feed your Neighbor

Imagine not having a meal when you got home from work tonight or not being able to feed your family. Hunger is a problem that many people in our communities face. The recession in our country has increased hunger and homelessness. One in every eight American is hungry. Food banks, soup kitchens, and the government try to solve the problem of hunger but everyone is not being reached.

Even right here in Middlesex County, people are struggling to get food. Elijah's Promise, Meals on Wheels, and Rutgers Against Hunger have been trying to provide food for the hungry. Elijah's Promise is a soup kitchen that has been feeding low-income families in Middlesex County for about twenty years. Meals on Wheels delivers meals to hungry senior citizens around the country. Rutgers Against Hunger is working to increase the awareness of hunger, promote

activism to overcome hunger, raising money, and collecting food to provide relief to the hungry. Although, these organizations have been successful in feeding people in Middlesex County, many people still remain hungry.

So many people are suffering from hunger worldwide. Lack of resources and money cause people to struggle for food. We owe it to ourselves to make a difference in the world. By starting to help your own community, you will be making a change to help more hungry people. If this is done in each community, hunger could be reduced. So, grab that extra loaf of bread and vegetables from your kitchen and hand them over to a person who doesn't have any access to food. They will be forever grateful!

Resources and money are important to have in order to feed the hungry. Volunteers to donate time, money, and food are important for these organizations to be successful. It's time for people to step up and help their fellow neighbors who are struggling from hunger. These organizations with the help of the government need to find new and creative ways to reach the hungry. Everyone does not have a means of getting to a food bank or soup kitchen but everyone does have a right to have food. People are struggling worldwide to find food for themselves and their families. What are you going to do to make a difference and reach these people? Wouldn't you want to be helped?

Sincerely,  
Rima Patel

Dear Editor,

Hunger has always been a huge problem for as long as mankind has been around. Ever since the dawn of the first civilizations, there always have been the fortunate who can indulge in a vast variety of foods, and the unfortunate who can barely provide enough food for themselves. In today's modern world, this issue is still prevalent, mostly in third world countries where the population of people is overwhelming enough to outnumber the quantity of food and goods produced. Yet, what most people don't realize is that this problem of lack of food is even prominent in progressive countries such as the United States of America. Every neighborhood has a local shelter for people who lack food every day for their family and themselves. In the state of New Jersey, where I reside, the problem of hunger is masked, although if looked at in depth, it is very obvious.

In fact, The Community FoodBank of New Jersey reports a 20% increase in the number of people seeking food assistance. Statistics from the Community FoodBank of New Jersey indicate that 40% of households receiving food from the organization had to choose between paying for food and paying rent. The Poverty Research Institute reports that one out of every five New Jersey families does not earn enough to afford basic necessities: food, housing, and child care. Although 85% of these families have at least one working family member. Hunger also is taking a toll on the families as the food insecurity percentage is rising. Over 281,000 households in New Jersey report being food insecure in 2007 (8.8% of NJ's population). At the same rate due to the depression in the economy, 1 out of 5 New Jersey families do not earn enough to afford basic necessities such as food and housing.

As the hardship of the economy hits more families, many organizations that once did provide food to the needy can no longer supply the demand and serve food on certain days. Some such as Elijah's Promise can't accommodate for the increase in people who need dinner anymore. Although, more organizations like these are solidifying to help stop hunger in their neighborhoods, their efforts aren't meeting up with the sudden boom in people who can't afford food anymore.

Sincerely,

Malay Parekh